



Her house is bursting with energy: colors, shapes, joy and meaning are flowing towards you. We are visiting Elisa Lejeuz, an established artist in and outside of Aruba. Elisa has had her work displayed in New York and is no stranger to the Netherlands. Cado de Lannoy is an up-and-coming talent, a creative spirit that really wants to make it, especially with his photo art. These two artistic minds met, interviewed one another and explored. The result: an interview between two colorful people passionate about the Aruban cultural world.

Cado: "Did you ever think that you would be making your own clothes for your own brand?"

Elisa: "No, never. I originally come from the textile world. After attending the art school in Arnhem and receiving my masters in textile I wanted to work as a fabric designer. That's why I work with screen printing, which really comes from that world. However, I use it in paintings instead of on fabrics or textile. Later on I also started to design clothing which were seen in the Fashion Week of Aruba. I designed umbrellas that matched well together with the clothes."

Cado: "Photography is my art and I want to represent it in a different way in Aruba, the place where I live and work. Capturing abandoned monuments just before they disappear, or as seen here on photos, chairs which can be found everywhere. I see them on the side of the road and capture them with my camera. These chairs can be seen from the Northern part of the island of Aruba to the town of San Nicolas. They form a perfect spot for people to relax and unwind in the evening."

Elisa: "I think it is a striking composition. It looks so surprisingly, with significant details. A bucket. A puddle of water next to three mopping rags. You're going to invent something. As if it just rained."

Cado: "I do not touch them; I just let them stand there for what they are."

Morning inspiration

In Elisa's studio, where you are inspired by all the shapes and colors around you, the couple is chatting away. Cado asks Elisa how she starts with the clothing design. "I make a painting and take a picture of it. Then I transfer it into the computer. With clothing it is more difficult, because you have to consider shoulder straps, for example. When you want to place text in a certain position, you need to work with patterns along the way. Then these patterns will go to a factory. They will first send me the fabric samples. I pay them and eventually I will get it back."

She shows her dress and stands next to a painting. It is identical. "It is printed in China; they are very advanced when it comes to that kind of expertise." Elisa is always active capturing an image anywhere, anytime. "A tile, graffiti, pictures from New York ... I'm always looking for a figure. As for color, that will come automatically." Cado: "I also used to make T-shirts on a small scale, by using a printer. It is so awesome, that you do that yourself. How do you actually come up with something?" Elisa: "I just simply begin". However, she often makes a painting collection, just like now, that revolves around a theme. "Especially in the morning I am full of energy. With a cup of coffee I look at my work and see what it needs."

Outside

Cado has the desire to take his art - pictures that will transcend Aruba into another perspective -

Cado comes home to Elisa's

Up-and-coming talent versus an established artist



across the borders of the island. "I used to be a professional beach tennis player, but that became a little bit dull after a few years. My main focus at the moment is this. With Korteweg (an art project initiated by, among others, Cado) I already received many requests regarding my work that I accomplish with pallet wood. With TEDx Aruba for example, I helped setting up the stage and I created the props. Yes, I am a full-time artist. It's fun and exciting at the same time, because you are self-employed. If you do nothing, then nothing really happens." How do you motivate yourself to be bigger, he asks Elisa. "Take the plane to New York. You cannot just sit in around your studio and wait for them to come to you. When I just started, the banks here were not interested in having art displayed on their walls. In 2003 I took a plane to Curaçao and had an exhibition in Bloemhof. Afterwards I went to the Netherlands where I was distributing books, which was then followed by an invitation to San Francisco. I am always looking out for something to start with."

The art of multitasking

Not only is Elisa an artist, but she is also a mother of two. It was not easy to combine motherhood with her creative profession. "I was forced to paint in the morning during their nap as I needed to concentrate. But sometimes you are right in the middle of your creative bubble and you suddenly realize that you have to prepare dinner as well. The art

of multitasking... I sometimes forgot that the kids had their swimming lessons, because I was completely submerged into my work", she says with a huge smile. "You must have discipline," Elisa says firmly. Cado: "I still have not started with my own family yet, I'm 29, professionally speaking I still have my freedom. However, I keep myself busy with all kind of things. It does not stop and you need to be on top of it. I feel, however, that there is a market to make a living out of it, but you need to work on your marketing, your contacts and you certainly must be a social person." "Yes, being social is a must-have characteristic, says Elisa.

Happiness

For her it is important that she stands perfectly behind each project or assignment. "I only do things that I believe in." The reason of the one-liners that you often see reflected in her paintings is because she wants it to be a source of inspiration. Cado wants to tell a story that is captured with his photos. "I want to give people the opportunity to get a piece of history, and show them that some places I capture with my camera are still beautiful, although framed in a different perspective, or add a certain value. To be able to do everything you really like on a daily basis means happiness to me. Creating your own destination." To Elisa happiness means a balanced, uncomplicated life and above all being healthy. "Happiness comes from within; it's the way you look at life."

The world

According to Cado, the world would look much better if we all could work together and strive towards the same goal. Elisa would like to see more awareness in terms of a cleaner life. "Generally speaking, I think that we do not take care of the earth sufficiently. There is a great deal of pollution in so many parts of the world. Having visited the northern part of Alaska recently, I realized then how pure nature can be. I cannot wait until something happens concerning the issue of the plastic waste disposal. We should make a start with all those plastic bags in the supermarkets here in Aruba. What I do not understand is that the entire garbage at home is not separated accordingly. It is something that should be taken care of world wide. In the end, planet earth would look so much better if just everyone would apply this and cooperate together!"